

# Silvercloud webinar 28th Feb 23: How to create a strategic employee wellbeing plan that embeds Mental Health Care

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## SPEAKERS

Dr. Angel Enrique, Sir Cary Cooper, Claire Farrow,

### **Claire Farrow** 00:03

Hello, everybody. Welcome to today's make a difference webinar. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Claire Farrow, I'm the Global Head of Content for make a difference media. And I also oversee the content for our annual MadWorld. Summit, which is in October, and for the watercooler event, which is in April.

### **Claire Farrow** 00:23

With almost 400 registrants, we've had another fantastic response to today's webinar, which is focused on how to create a strategic employee wellbeing plan that embeds mental health care. A huge thank you to silvercloud by unwell for sponsoring the session. We're delighted and honoured to be joined today by Professor Sir Cary Cooper, who's going to be sharing his wisdom in conversation with Dr. Angel Enrique, from Amwell. But first, a quick bit of housekeeping before I hand over,

### **Claire Farrow** 00:57

I wanted to let you know that today's session is being recorded, you will be sent a link to the recording a couple of days after the session, we can also include in there a link to the transcript. So you don't need to get that from anybody else we will provide that. And if you for whatever reason, you don't get the email or with the link or it goes into your spam folder, you can find it on our website, [www.makeadifference.media](http://www.makeadifference.media), where we have all of our webinars on demand for viewing, and all the follow up materials as well. So it's definitely worth having a look at that. We like our webinars to be as interactive as possible. We encourage people to share ideas and experiences in the chat to share your challenges. I'll be watching the chats and keeping an eye out for questions and sharing them with unhealth as we go along. So that we can hopefully integrate some of your unit feedback to some of your questions and comments in the conversation as we're going along. So please feel free to share your ideas and experiences.

The only thing I'd say and I'm sure lots of people have been on these webinars before, and apologies if you've heard this before. But if you're a supplier in this space, please don't use the chat as an opportunity to pitch your services. Because that's not what it's for. We do welcome lots of ideas, though. And suggestions, but no pitches. Okay, I think that's about it. So from me. So what I'm going to do now is I'm going to hand it over to Dr. Angel Enrique to introduce himself. And he will set the scene for the session, and then introduce Sir Cary Cooper, over to you.

**Dr. Angel Enrique** 02:49

Thanks very much clear. Well, first of all, good morning, everyone. Thank you for joining the these webinars, I'm really pleased to be here today to speak to Sir Cary Cooper. So I'm gonna share my screen so that, you know, you can go through some slides together. Before we get into into the conversation, as Claire said, you know, just to reiterate the fact that it is gonna be great if you pop up your questions into the chat so that we may make this more conversational. So I'll share my slides now. And let me know when you can see them, please.

**Dr. Angel Enrique** 03:29

Can you see my slides? Yes. Great. Thank you. Okay, so as Colin was saying, the aim of today, the topic of today is to talk about how to create a strategic employee wellbeing plan that embeds in healthcare. So as I said, I'm really glad of being part of this conversation, because mostly, you know, to interview Professor Cary Cooper, who is the expert here, and just to walk through what we're going to cover, we're just gonna do a quick, quick round of introductions. And then through these slides, I will walk you through some of the findings that we got from a survey that we commissioned on workplace wellbeing late last year in September 2022, to get a sense of what's the mental health of the workforce and how supportive they felt. And we also ask employers about it. And that will open up a discussion around how to create these workplace wellbeing strategy and Professor Cooper, will guide us through some of the key elements that need to be considered. And again here, like feel free to pop up your questions. And we'll find out with some conclusions about what does this mean for employers now on going forward, and the q&a, like the idea is that will happen naturally through the conversation otherwise, at the end, I'll cooperate if there is any question in the in the chat.

So just introduce myself very briefly. My name is Angel Enrique. I'm from Spain. I'm a Digital Health Scientist in, well, my background is in clinical psychology. I did my PhD and then transitioned to industry around six years ago, my work has been mostly I've been working a decade at the intersection of technology and mental health care. So basically answering the question, how do we leverage technologies for the improvement of improving access to mental health care?

So, that's me and then, of course, I wanted to do an introduction to Professor Cary Cooper, who is an American born psychologist and the 50th anniversary professor of organisational psychology. Held at the Manchester Business School University of Manchester Professor Cary Cooper is recognised as a world leading expert on workplace wellbeing. He was previously president of relate, clinical advisor plans at UK president of the Institute of welfare, president of the CIPD and past president of the British Association for counselling and psychotherapy, he was also the founding editor in chief of the Journal of organisational behaviour. And his latest projects includes promoting the National Forum for health and well being at work which is focused on improving workplace wellbeing in the UK and globally. So with this, like as an introduction, Professor Cooper, thank you for for your time and for being here today.

**Sir Cary Cooper** 06:21

Thank you Angel, great being here. Great.

**Dr. Angel Enrique 06:25**

So as I said, just to set the scene a about, you know, what's the status of the mental health workforce, we're going to share some of the findings, you may have seen this report, which will probably stay last year as well, on the status of mental health in the in the workforce in the in the UK, the white paper is available for you to download, you have here the QR code, but also at the end of the session, we'll share some links of interest that may be mentioned here.

**Dr. Angel Enrique 06:53**

So this survey was run across 1000 employees in medium to large organisations. And the aim, as I said, was to see the state of their mental health and wellbeing and how supported they felt. As part of the survey, we also included the type on the directors managers to get a sense of, again, of their perception on how mental health was being managed within the workforce. And 80% of them actually stated that, that people were the company's most valuable asset, which is a response that we're quite used to get that it doesn't always translate into action, but at least that used to be the willingness now they like employer to us to recognise that people is the is the main asset. And then it's like, what what to do about it, as I said, the results are available for you to access.

And even if you want to delve deeper, even Professor Cooper make some comments across the white paper in the in the report. So again, these are we will, of course have conducted a post pandemic the idea was to get an accurate picture of how people was doing after, after the pandemic, in terms of their mental health. And after relief of the restrictions going back to the to this new normal that we are living in it, we can call it like that. And many things have changed on what used to be normal and well adapted now to this reality.

**Dr. Angel Enrique 08:21**

There was something a kind of positive that emerged from this, you know, traumatic pandemic, and this, that we were all going through the same situation, we were all going through to these uncomfortable emotions of uncertainty, grief loss, and that opened up a conversation about mental health. So when we look at the results of our survey, what we found, what we saw is that in general, a 46%, which is almost half of the of the employees who responded, the survey reported that their mental health had worsened since the pandemic and this was even more pronounced in specific sectors like health care, and education where it goes to 50% and above and of course, we're seeing the consequences of that even to the strikes in the NHS on the other side, other sectors which so it's really being you know, become very apparent at the moment. And then there was also the effect in the work life balance.

**Dr. Angel Enrique 09:19**

So one in five reported loneliness, remote working, being affected, you know, affect mental health. So we are accustomed to work in offices, then we go remote, and of course, we see the advantage of this, but there are also the disadvantages of this, you know, working in isolation, which may feel sometimes that we may feel that, you know, we're alone. Also, the 22% reported that they struggle with blurred boundaries between home and work and this is a constant reality, the difficulty to switch off on how employers what employers can do to to facilitate and to enable new employees to really just connect. When we looked at when we asked about the health in general, like 1/3 report that they felt depressed

in the past six months, and then 24% people said that they were unable to cope. And this is key, because one of the key elements for depression and insight to really have an impact is the interference online, right. And it definitely shows on the on the daily function. And what we're seeing here is that a quarter of the of the sample were reporting that they were unable to cope. And almost half of the respondents took time off because of the family, or because of themselves, or their family having a mental health struggle. So again, just circumstance in regards to how mental health is affecting employees and all of us. So we also asked about the experience of stress. We know stress is not necessarily a negative emotion, stress is actually a way of the body to adapt to face threats or just obstacles in general.

But it's when it becomes intense that it has negative implications. So what we saw is that 60% of the respondents reported that their Concentration and Productivity were negatively impacted when they felt stress. And of course, it has an impact on the quality of the work where 40% reported that stress led them to low quality of the work they were they were producing. So of course, this is a way in which I measure is created when I do what I have built up enough quality, this also personal motivation to work and how I'm feeling my performance and my value at work.

**Dr. Angel Enrique 09:53**

And just a final point here the point of stress, it also affects the relationship with colleagues, right. And this is key even more in this new reality, what we are even working more isolated, where we are in this hybrid modalities, or even a fully remote, where it's even more important that we feel we're connecting to other colleagues. So you know, we also see here the effects that stress has at this level. When we look this in the context of further research, we looked at the Health and Safety Executive survey that was done who found that half of all workplace absences in the UK were attributable to stress, depression and anxiety. So again, painting the reality that people is actually struggling and taking time off with.

So to these figures of absenteeism, and presenteeism that affects the bottom line, which is the ultimate, the cause the cost to employers, which goes from 33 to 42 billion on money. So the estimated costs between you know, direct and indirect costs is huge, and even raised more the necessity of doing something about, and when we think of doing something about it, we know that the interventions related to improvement of wellbeing in employees lead to return on investments.

**Dr. Angel Enrique 13:17**

And you know, in general research is showing that when you do interventions, you can increase an average of 12% in the proper period. So it's something to consider as we'll cover today is not only about doing just one intervention is about having a strategy. Right. And that's what we'll cover today, as a final slide to open up the conversation with Professor Cooper. We also asked employees if they felt supported by the company. And what they report is that 20% said that they felt that the support provided by the employer was enough and 50% actively wanting to see more. Meaning that they didn't feel completely, you know, supported by by their employer, which is, which is what we're here for. Let's see, how do we kind of really make sure that our employees are cared for. 1/3 have never been asked about the mental health work. And this is problematic because we cannot solve a problem if we're unable to identify it in the first place. Right. So being able to ask about mental health is important. And

our survey also showed that one in seven believed workplace mental health is still a taboo. Which again, it talks about the role of stigma that we covered with Professor Cooper. So this is found the point is that I wanted to share that scene. And before we go into the conversation, obviously, first of all we have this poll that we wanted to share which is about the employee wellbeing strategy. I'm going to ask you to very briefly like saying what do we mean by strategy and how is that different than by having You know, just isolated benefits, just so that people understand what we're asking here?

**Sir Cary Cooper** 15:06

Well, I think what we're talking about Angel by the way, the very interesting findings from silvercloud really not not unexpected in a way, given what's going on and looking at the science behind it anyway. I think what we mean by strategy is rather than just ping pong, tables, beanbags, sushi at your desk, the well being day, all that sort of stuff. What I call low hanging fruit, that's not a strategy. That's interesting. I love the wellbeing day and having my smoothies and mindfulness at lunch. But to be honest with you strategy means how seriously is your organisation taking it? Do they have a director of health and wellbeing? For example? Does the board look at the metrics? Or the senior leadership team look at the metrics about what what you're doing? Are you achieving what does good look like? Do they know what the indicators should be? And do they have a proper strategy like they would have for almost any other aspects of their business? Do they have an HR strategy? Well, do they have a health and wellbeing strategy? And, and and is the board held? Does the board hold the senior leadership accountable for it? And what does it look like?

**Dr. Angel Enrique** 16:29

Thanks, so I think that with that in mind, if you can answer the poll, and we'll get back to that in a minute.

**Claire Farrow** 16:37

Can I interrupt you just for a second? We're getting lots of questions through from the audience here who want to get a clarification on the survey. That's okay. Could you confirm? Was it cross sector? The survey?

**Dr. Angel Enrique** 16:50

It was it was across different sectors. Sorry, because I was sharing the screen so I couldn't see.

**Dr. Angel Enrique** 17:01

It was across sectors and work with people from a healthcare applications, and then many other factors as well. So it was a multidisciplinary in that regard. And it was in the UK. So we've we've run different service, but the one I'm talking about is the UK, ac uk.

**Claire Farrow** 17:18

And then the other question was for the people that reported as depressed. Were they self reporting?

**Dr. Angel Enrique** 17:24

Yes, this is also reported to the employees who were asking about the symptoms of depression and anxiety and in general depression and anxiety.

**Claire Farrow** 17:34

Okay, great. And one last question about the survey. Do you know by any chance, what percentage reported experiencing stress?

**Dr. Angel Enrique** 17:43

I don't have the figure to the top of my head. Yeah, but it will be in the report. So the report is accessible so that that figure can be found there.

**Claire Farrow** 17:53

Yeah. Great. And we're we're sharing the link. And you've also shared the QR code, haven't you? But we will share the link as well. In the follow up materials? Yeah, yeah. Okay. I'm going back on mute.

**Dr. Angel Enrique** 18:05

Thanks Claire. Okay. So can we see the results of the ball? Okay, can you see them Professor Cooper?

**Sir Cary Cooper** 18:18

Yes, I can see it. Yeah. So poor only 5%. Not great. Fair, pretty good. Great. So great, is not very great. We're down to 8%. Well, I'm not surprised. I think the CIPD found something like 40 only 40% of employers that they contacted HR directors said that they had a they were doing strategic well being. And I don't even know if they know what that means. But let's say 40%. And 60% said they they were they weren't really they were doing. They were doing the low hanging fruit stuff. They were having mental health first stating they were having the well being days well being champions. They were doing that kind of stuff. And HR was, you know, concerned about it as an issue. But again, it wasn't a major thing that the senior leadership team would look at, on a regular basis. Not surprising result.

**Dr. Angel Enrique** 19:23

Yeah, yeah, I totally agree and what you've been covering in other conversations Professor Cooper. But in regards to that. It's not about housing, that isolated offering, it's about having a systemic approach towards the tackling the mental health. So to start the conversation, Professor Cooper, I think one of the first element that I wanted to cover is that final figure that I showed about the role of stigma, because we see the stigma that is still being mentioned as part of the Mental Health conversation. So how sense are you think this is what organisations and work with employers to to overcome this issue?

**Sir Cary Cooper** 19:57

Well, I think employers are beginning to, I think the good news, if you look at that Angel it's not that bad. Actually one in seven, there's still a stigma. But if you'd have done that, before the pandemic, that figure would have been much higher. So take five years ago, that figure might have been three out of seven. So I think it's we're making good progress and how it's happening is not just about us, you know, saying, hey, there's a stigma on mental health in the workplace talking about it. It's partly been helped by mental health first aid, because we have the Mental Health First Aid being in many organisations, public and private. Do you know how I think it's really been helped, it's by leaders actually admitting that they haven't been able to cope. If you take a look at Antonia Herraria at Lloyds Bank, he's not there.

Now he's in another bank. But at that point in time, he talked about his own personal challenge with mental health. We've had, oh God, the chief executive of BP talk about it as well. We've had somebody at Barclays Bank, we've had a number of leaders, just being honest and saying, You know what I'm having to take time off because of my depression. And the minute you get leader saying it, then it becomes it flows down the system.

**Sir Cary Cooper 21:17**

And I think I think the stigma is going, it's going pretty rapidly and one in seven doesn't bother me. And it's probably the one in seven probably in the SME sector, where maybe it's not as prevalent the the acceptance of the mental health thing. But again, we get less evidence about what's going on in the SME sector that that is a problem. So I think we're making real progress on this. And look at the figures are consistent, like you say, if you look at the HSE figures anywhere between 50 and 60% a year are so if you take a look long term sickness absence, 50, between 50 and 60%, depending on what you're looking at, is due to the common mental disorders, stress, anxiety and depression. That's been around a while. So I think we're I think it's an I think the pandemic actually stimulated a discussion about mental ill health, as well. Because people were working from home feeling I socially isolated, being more vocal in meetings with their when they many organisations have managers doing one to ones with people. And not just about work, but ones do want, how are you feeling? Because we said, that's what you should be doing. And in those kinds of contexts, people were talking to their line manager, if they could, if they had a line manager was receptive. They were talking about the issues, they were experienced of loneliness or feeling low or worried about their job security or worried about their finances. So I think we're making I think we're making pretty good progress on the stigma issue, whether we're, but we're not making as good progress as we should on the strategic issue.

23:03

Yeah, yeah. And I think those are great points. Because the first part is true, there is an improvement. And we need to recognise that and part of it is also due to all this pandemic of the fact that we were, you know, struggling with mental health. And I don't think he's going back, I don't think we're going, you know, back to that, like we are all, you know, seeing that mental health is, is happening to us, it's happening to our family. So the conversation is here, and it's in the mainstream now.

**Sir Cary Cooper 23:34**

Here's the only worry I have, we're about to go in and many countries are already in recession. The UK, Germany is virtually in recession, as well, formally, legally, and many other countries will go into it. And that's going to go for the next year or two, my real worry is will organisations become much more bottom line during that period of time, will employ health and well being less a priority than it currently is. And it should be even more of a priority, because you want to retain and we don't have the skill base that we need, particularly in the UK, we certainly don't. Because of Brexit, we've lost a lot of skilled people. If you want to retain them, and attract them and get them back, then we have to have the right culture to do it. So more than ever before, particularly where we're going we're heading into big recessionary times. We need to do this more than ever before, but will some senior leaders all of a sudden shift and say this has got to be bottom line, we've got to lose people. We've got to do this and that and that and it becomes counterproductive. More than ever. We're gonna need a kind of strategic approach and how do we create the right kind of culture to retain talent?

**Dr. Angel Enrique 24:53**

Exactly, exactly. Because that I think that that's what I was going to what you were saying Professor Cooper is like because we're gonna get going now, like companies are going to struggle now now is that when they would they need proper strategy even even a higher because it's not about having just that you know, isolating benefit, it's about having a strategy. So the people that I have in my company, I am able to care for them, I have the infrastructure in place to make sure that they are okay, and that they perform at their best. Right. So this is the point about the strategy. So why don't we talk about that part Professor Cooper in regards to the how, so how to create these, you know, studies, this employee will be planned that in best mental health care, like what are kind of the key elements are the steps that need to follow in order to do this? And I think to start the conversation on that Professor Cooper will be like, starting by who, who should take responsibility for building this strategy? Who are the stakeholders that need to be involved?

**Sir Cary Cooper 25:53**

Okay, well, the stakeholders are us, the individual, we're a stakeholder, so we have to take some responsibility ourselves, then there's the organisation, let's go to the organisation for starters. So I don't think it's complicated science. By the way, many organisations now particularly big public sector bodies, and private companies have a director of health and well being that's a start, we need somebody who's got responsible for operational or operationalizing, the strategy, okay? All right. So when we need that, and that person reports, either to the HR director or chief medical officer, and in many companies, it's even the CEO. So that's, that's number one. So we have somebody who's responsible for it, rather than and what companies did when they did the low hanging fruit is they had well being champions, great to have well being champions, but it's dispersed throughout the organisation, and they don't have real online responsibility for it, we need somebody who's responsible for the operations of health and well being and ensuring that it works.

**Sir Cary Cooper 27:01**

Number two, we need employee voice, we need to know what how employees perceive their organisation. So that would be the that would be part of the responsibility to well, doing well being audits, tonnes of instruments around tonnes of ways of doing this. This is not complicated science. My old university spin off company, Robertson Cooper did this does it now. And they they do wellbeing audits, and as the lots of other organisations do with the HSE, do it, okay. So that's important, because you're getting employee voice and based on employee voice, you develop a strategy. So that's where I would start. But then, further down the line, when you pick up and you start developing a strategy, and you say, Hey, we have a problem in that part of the organisation. The problem is a glass ceiling for women, and in other parts an autocratic management style. In another part, it's a long working hours culture. And another part is they won't let people work flexibly or, or hybridly. Right, you can identify, you know, the diagnosis is not complicated science. This is easy peasy stuff. And many companies have been doing that now for five, seven years, maybe longer 10 years.

**Sir Cary Cooper 28:17**

Okay, so that's where you start. But I think ultimately, if you want to achieve something like we did with the gender pay gap, how did we actually narrow the gender pay gap, we only narrowed it when it



became a responsibility of the board to highlight what the gender pay gap was, in their annual reports, they had to say, you know, there's a 17% gap or whatever, they had to provide the data nationally, mandated to do that. So I think, in the health and well being arena, I think we need somebody on the board on the board, a non executive director who's responsible for employee health and well being ultimately, by the way, in the UK, in the NHS, every hospital has a non executive director on their board now, who's responsible for employee health and well being that person then needs the metrics to decide whether the board to hold the board accountable. So the metrics is simple to there are subjective metrics like employee satisfaction, are employees satisfying? How do they perceive the way they're managed? Their hours of work, etc.

**Sir Cary Cooper 29:37**

Then there is objective measures, which are things like stress related ill health, what's the date on that? What's your long term sickness absence look like? Labour turnover are people leaving? Because if people are leaving, and it's higher than the sector average, then that's an indication that the Board should then go down to the director of health and well being and saying, Hey, ate over the last six months, we're losing people in that division of our company, or we're losing women, or we're losing young recruits. Right? What the hell's going on? Find out. So that So ultimately, a strategy requires somebody at board level, but I wouldn't start there. I would start with a director of health and well being get employee voice by doing well being develop a strategy that way, and then go to the board. And the board should be there are companies now we're quarterly, they'll spend a half an hour or an hour discussing the metrics. So what's our labour turnover look like? Have we lost a lot of people the last quarter where have we lost them have either more stress related ill health in the organisation. And this is extremely important as we enter a recession. This is vital. If you want to retain talent. An HR director said to me many years ago when they during the last financial crisis and gal it was interesting, he said to me, in a meeting I was at he said, I said, Why are you do you never were in wellbeing at all. The finance sector was lousy. In this respect. By the way, they're now extremely good. And I said, why you're doing it. He said, two words, regrettable turnover. During the during the financial crisis, we lost 40% of our staff. Right? Now, we're mean and lead, we can't afford to lose anybody. In other words, talent retention, that's still a big driver, by the way. So talent retention, in my view, is really important that you want to you want to attract does lead generation, you want to retain them. And the young millennials, there's only one way to do it, you got to change the culture, because that generation will not. And I want to emphasise will not tolerate what their parents tolerated to pay their mortgage. In any case, that generation can't even afford a mortgage. So forget that. But if you want to retain them, and attract them, and they'll leave you if they don't get what the right, kind of they may be snowflakes, but they're right snowflakes. They've got they're doing the right thing, leaving organisations that don't give them what they need as individuals, the development they need. That feeling valued and being recognised.

**Dr. Angel Enrique 32:18**

Yeah, I mean, like, I think what you said is definitely, you know, these, these key ingredients that need to be protecting the measurement element is key from the two sides of you, that you're mentioning is from the subjective side on the object itself, right, and the importance of ensuring that you have measurements in place and KPI, you know, as you say that it's something that matters for the board to report on, you know, how is my workforce doing in terms of like, their well being, and as you say that,

you know, validated questionnaire that can measure these very easily, it's easy to do, it's easy to put in place this infrastructure, and then you know, in regards to these objective measures, as well. And I think one important element as well here is that, like, when strategic decisions are made, and you put this infrastructure like this measurement will even allow you to iterate over time in regards to the the steps they put in place is important, well, do I need to do something else here, just by hiring those methods in place, we allow you to even improve it over time, and really, you know, keep listening to your workforce and what they what are their needs?

**Sir Cary Cooper 33:27**

Well, I run something I chair something called the National Forum for health and well being at work made up of 44 global employers, he's our HR directors, chief medical officers, directors of health and well being people responsible for health and well being and major companies, you know, from BT, to it goes on GSK, Microsoft, the UK, NHS executive, the civil service of the UK, government, etc, etc. Okay, now, these people felt it's really important to have the metrics. And they developed, we had a conference at BT headquarters, chaired by the former chief medical officer of BP, and chaired by the chief medical officer of BK at the time, and we developed the metrics, the subjective and objective measures that we should we have, if anybody wants him to get in touch with me, I'll make sure you get you can get a copy online, of what we produced at that conference. But that's not complicated science. I mean, we do that for other things. We look at turnover, we look at all the financials in life when we're in an organisation, right?

**Sir Cary Cooper 34:44**

And incidentally, that's another thing. Maybe on the risk register, we should have a risk of a lack of well being, in other words, the risk of labour turnover of losing good people. So the risk register might Another vehicle for highlighting the issues and making sure that the senior leadership team are looking at that, as well, as well as the annual report for the stakeholders who invest in your business they should have on their annual report, what is the level of job satisfaction and this organisation? Are we losing people? How, what's our stress related ill health. Now, in some organisations, they have it on their sustainability report, but they don't have it on their main report. And we need to do that. And I think that would be another vehicle to hold the organisation accountable to stakeholders, as well as to internal employees, employee stakeholders. Yeah, yeah,

**Dr. Angel Enrique 35:46**

That's a great point, because it needs to be like kind of a primary outcome of the business as well, because it ultimately will affect the bottom line. And I think one other point that you made, or it's important is, is, you know, how do I retain this talent, and I wanted to make it just premise in the context of the current situation we're gonna live in where, you know, even these companies need to become more efficient, and even doing like, even put more pressure on the ones who are staying. Right. And there's this element of, you know, I think for HR directors, like sometimes the challenge is that, you know, how do I really convince, you know, the people on the board to make this really happen to make it, as you're saying, from this supplementary aim to just the main aim, you know, and just, perhaps now, it's a time where, you know, we can capitalise on the needs of keeping of retaining the talent to make sure you know, we have them for facing these new reality of the recession were going through now.

**Sir Cary Cooper 36:46**

Yeah, I think we've always been doing, I think that's been going on for a long time trying to convince with the data. And there's there's a lot of data now is around showing the link between lack of wellbeing, and how mental lack of mental well being in the workplace and employee adverse health effects and links to productivity, there's more and more data coming out. And so, you know, I'm not even sure I mean, you still need to convince them, you still need to have the data to show it hits the bottom line. By the way, if it doesn't hit the bottom line, you can see why they might be reluctant. You know, if people are happy, feel engaged, feel recognised, feel valued. If that doesn't affect the bottom line, then I'm out of a job. You know, people like me, organisation, occupational psychologists, and occupational medics. HR, that's part of our job, we have to create the culture that produces the goodies that hits the bottom line, and you treat people properly, then you will, you will get the results and they'll stay. So you won't have the kind of, you know, adverse effects of of high labour turnover, we're losing key people. The grunt regrettable turnover, which I think is quite important, particularly in a time when we don't have as many skilled workers as we used to have. That's certainly the case in the UK.

**Dr. Angel Enrique 38:14**

Yeah that may be definitely. And I think that it's also that you're talking about the the employee value, they need to feel that their work is meaningful, contributing to the company, that there is a good work culture as well within right so that they, it's not only it's that I'm doing that I know what this is contributing into, and having a good culture in place at work.

**Sir Cary Cooper 38:38**

And part of that, by the way, is something we were going to talk about anyway, I think Angel which is the line manager, my National Forum for health and well being when it first started six years ago, said that the key issue if they had to do one thing, and one thing only in the whole well being space, it was ensuring that when we recruit people for managerial roles, or promote them to manage your roles, that we make sure there's parity between their people skills, their EQ, their emotional intelligence, and their technical skills. That is not the way we promote people. We promote people in the developed world, no matter which country you're in, based on their technical skills. So you're a very good marketeer. And now we'll make you a marketing manager not looking at does this would this person make a good manager? Would they be good at listening? Would they be good at engaging people and in a hybrid world that we're in now, where people are working really flexibly as a result of the pandemic? managing people, some are going to be in a central office and some are going to be remote is going to be more difficult and if they don't have the people skills, the emotional intelligence, the social interpersonal skills, we're in disaster area, and therefore it is really critical that we get these people in and how Aren't they gonna recognise when people aren't coping with their workload?

**Sir Cary Cooper 40:03**

If the leading cause in the whole of the developed world the leading causes of sick long term sickness absence is stress, anxiety and depression? It's not just the UK, it's everywhere. If that is the case, how will somebody who's not very emotionally intelligent, be able to identify and have the social skills to be able to see when people have unmanageable workloads unrealistic deadlines, is showing signs of not coping, and trying to stop it before it's too late. Before they burn out? Or leave?

**Dr. Angel Enrique** 40:37

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. And that was the next topic I wanted to cover, the role of the line manager, but they just wanted to ask Sir Cooper because there are a lot of comments here in the in the chat. And one question that was asked, like, lots of people are saying they have wellbeing added to their main health and safety role or the HR role. So do you think this is okay? Do you think this is the step in the right direction?

**Sir Cary Cooper** 41:03

So I don't quite understand that. Do you mean that this becomes part of their managerial role?

**Dr. Angel Enrique** 41:09

For people, to HR people in the HR roles, wellbeing being added.

**Sir Cary Cooper** 41:15

Oh, yeah, by the way, no, HR is on to this, if you take the UK, for example, not just the UK, UK, Ireland, VA CIPD. And I was president of it for six years, until Until last year. CIPD is really into this HR professionals now. They are really, it's not like the good old days, where it's where HR people, well, what was more personnel than HR, in other words, really in the last six, seven years, you know, good work, is what they that's the strapline of HR people, how do we create good work? How do we create work, which is meaningful, engages, people recognises people, values them, and so on. That's very much part of HR. Now. I don't think that's I don't think that's an issue. I think HR is totally on board with this, in fact, almost over on board with this, you know, they really are making real headway. It's not, like, in the good old days, was paying rations, and all they did was hire and fire and pay. And that's not what HR is. That's what personnel was. That's not what HR is. And I think, really, the H is taking precedent now.

**Dr. Angel Enrique** 42:33

Yeah, and a lot of comments on the chat, also saying how, you know, people in HR, the titles have now transitioned to instead of HR being head of people, right, we've changed this, this connotation about what this role is for, which I think is important. So Professor Cooper just moving on to that other part of the conversation that we were starting to tax, which is the role of line managers with you know, this strategy, like, how do you foresee that this strategy should like you know, how, yeah, how to overcome how to address sorry, the challenge of our line managers in order to have a successful strategy.

**Sir Cary Cooper** 43:11

Okay, I think there are two things. One is, the two approaches to this one approach is to do with the existing managerial pool of people you've got, okay, so we have an existing pool, probably 40% have the good skills naturally, you know, have the social interpersonal emotional skills naturally, probably 40% Don't have it naturally. They're technically more technically orientated people, but are trainable. I'm more worried about the 20%, who are in a managerial role, who shouldn't probably be anywhere near people, from the point of view of being a being in a managerial role right? Now. So let's look at that group. Let's look at the full group. So if it was me, HR knows where the bodies lie. There's no question that you go to any HR professional, and you say to them in any part of a business, and you say to them, who are your good managers, who are the real good people, managers, and they'll say, all

Fred and Janet and Peter and Helen, and they're brilliant, right? They're great. But when it looks when you go to Rupert, I wouldn't put them there anyway. I mean, he's, he's dreadful. He really shouldn't be in that role. We got to find, but he's technically very competent. So we've got it there. Let's retain him. And then they'll go to other people. And they'll say, Well, these people just need training. Let's give them some training. We promoted them, but we didn't give them any training. And he's technically or she's technically good, but they need the training.

**Sir Cary Cooper 44:41**

So that's where I'd start. Let's look at the pool we currently have. HR knows who they are, they really do. And if they don't know then we need new people in HR. Really, they should know. The managers that are delivering and that are not causing labour turnover. People leaving. And you know, the old euphemism. People never leave an organisation they leave a boss. And that is so true. Okay, so that's one thing you so that train the people in need to training, no need to train the people who don't need to try not everybody has to be trained, if they already have it naturally, and they're doing a good job. They're retaining people they're delivering, they're productive, they feel valued, and so on, and then have to deal with the problematic group of people who maybe should just put into a professional technical role and taken away from the management, but pain well, why shouldn't somebody be paid? Well, you know, they're really great engineers, but they're lousy engineering manager. Okay, so that's one.

**Sir Cary Cooper 45:47**

The second thing and this is for the future, the future is when doing recruitment of people, or promoting people to managerial roles, ensure that in your selection process, and, and or promotion process, there's parity between their people skills and their and their technical skills, you must put a lot of emphasis on that. And we don't do that. We don't do that enough. So when we're doing assessment centres, absolutely spend more time, don't hire people quickly, just to hit the bottom line, think carefully about who you're hiring, and make sure that you are getting people who have good people skills in managerial roles. So I think that's a that's a two parter. But I think that's the way to begin.

**Dr. Angel Enrique 46:41**

Yeah and you're explaining very well, and I think people is getting good good notes on it because there is this is duality, right? It's like, Yeah, I mean, I have my reality of these people who are already in the managerial positions, I, as an HR manager, when I have like, they weren't really there. So what do I do with it? Right, when they are already, you know, in these positions, but then there is like, you know, as opposed to thinking about the future, and making sure, as you said, that, you know, we hire people with the right, we, you know, make the people skills as part of the of the interview process, so that we make sure that we are getting people at the managerial levels, that they also have that element because it's as important as the technical element, right, in the sense that if they are not able to help, or facilitate or enable their employees to really perform, that's counterproductive.

**Dr. Angel Enrique 47:37**

So it's as important as them they having, you know, the right technical skills. So I think both are, you know, pretty good points. So I think just a people is actually engaging quite well in that like the index happier saying, yeah, like, we need to play people to their, to their strengths, they are saying, in the

sense that, you know, we need, as you say, Professor Cooper, I think it's important to recognise that, yes, do do know, who are the good managers, and who are, you know, people who shouldn't be there in the first place. Right. So just moving into on to that. Sir Cooper, that was part one final element that I wanted to go over, and is that employees do not only exist within their work, they also exist outside, and that has a huge effect on their on the mental health. So I wanted to ask you, what are your views on, you know, there, in the serving we run, we asked about external factors affecting the will being of employees, or external factors, and of course, is one size replacing the number one factor was named as financial worries. And then for those who are children, they also mentioned the work life balance. So these are factors that are kind of external, but that they have an effect. So how, how would you go with your, your opinion, or your uploads to tackle these, these external factors that affect mental health?

**Sir Cary Cooper 49:00**

Those are very two big issues. I think financial wellbeing now as we enter a recession, cost of living crisis, cost of energy and the rest of it really big time, my National Forum for health and well being is just finished a report chaired by a senior person from Barclays Bank, who's a member of the National Forum, and we're going to have a very substantial report on financial well being what organisations should do. So it's going to say what organisations are currently doing good practice in this space. But that is really important going forward. I'm afraid this isn't part of a strategy. This is what strategic looks like. At the moment. Its financial well being cost of living crisis, energy, worries about job security, worries about their finances, worries about the interest rate increases that are global. And therefore this is a really important and having a strategy and doing this and that's why we came out we've gotten a report whereby have to publish in the next week, week or two on the national forum. So that's really important.

**Sir Cary Cooper 50:05**

The flexible working I think, is really good, really important too, which is the issue about work life integration, let's not talk about imbalance, we're in a different world now. But you know, here's the funny thing about the hybrid working organisations are doing the two plus three or three plus two, basically, most organisations that can. So what they're doing is they're saying, we expect you in two days a week, you can do whatever you want the next three days a week, and I asked the question, why that's not actually flexible working. That's a funny way of doing it. Because some people might want to come in five days a week, some may want to come in, in one week, one day a week, because they don't need to come in. But they might come in four days the following week. So flexible, shouldn't be you're not mandated. You have to be in to or you have to mandated to be in three, why do the, you know, good HR says the following, I trust you employee, what works for let's have a dialogue you in the boss. So you in the boss have a dialogue. And the boss says to you, I need you in on these kinds of days. Right? I need you one more team building or developing a new product or service. And then the individual says, well, I need to be in on these kinds of days. Okay, and you come up with a psychological contract, that's when HR should really be about and you allow you trust them to do people don't want to work 100% Look what your report found. silvercloud report found, it found that people who were working remote and when when we were working remotely, the social contact was a big downside for us. It affected our mental health 100% were working from people don't want to work 100% remotely, employers think oh my god, they all were going to go home and just stay at home five days a week, they're not going to really they have social needs to be met, forget about what they're actually doing

with work. They meet people at work, younger people certainly meet their partners at work, and so on. So the social needs are pretty profound to people will be going in, believe me, they will. But let them do it when they need to do it. And trust them, and value them. And I think that and work. It's not about work life balance, about work life integration, we have the technology to do this. And some people will want to go and five days a week, maybe young Zen generation who meet partners there and need to learn from the experience of older people, the older people will come in too, don't worry, they're not going to stay at home. Just trust them a bit. And I think we would get more out of people. If you've but the employers that say you can't do it at all, you get a couple of investment banks that say you have to be in 100% of the time. Big, big mistake, they will lose talent. Big time.

**Dr. Angel Enrique** 53:03

Yeah, and professor Cooper I wanted to just jump there because like I see a lot of people is asking now there was a study in the UK by this employer who were testing the possibility of, you know, asking people to work four days a week, instead of five mistakes with this flexibility. Right. And it's good that they even found improvements in performance in some instances. So yeah, aside even from you know, the going to the office is about even facilitating people to work for the intensify and still not being affected.

**Sir Cary Cooper** 53:38

By the way we I think we need that I need to think we need the four day working week for people who are at the coalface nurses, bus drivers, train drivers to problem we have there with a four day working week. I think the evidence is getting clear. And not just the big study done in the UK in 61, six among 61 employers, but we have Sweden did even better study because what they did is they did all the people working in the public sector in the city of Gothenburg for two whole years, they did it. And they did a 30 hour week versus a 40 hour week. Right? And they found it and then there's studies in Iceland, New Zealand are all over the place. They're all pointing in the same direction. However, the problem and I think the people who have to be at the coalface like nurses, they should be getting because they, they have to be there. They can't work from home. They should be given at least a four day working week.

**Sir Cary Cooper** 54:35

The problem we have is we don't have enough doctors. We don't have enough nurses. We don't have enough bus drivers. We don't have enough lorry drivers or trained drivers. So what do we do? If we go to a four day working week we have a bit of a problem because we don't have the talent. Unless we I guess in the UK context, unless we rejoin the EU I don't want to be political unless we are smart and rejoin the EU. and getting the single market, I think we get more people back in into the hospitals into the things where we could then have a four day working week for those people who have to be at the coalface. But four day working week evidence is pretty clear. It looks pretty positive. Yeah. There are downsides to it.

**Dr. Angel Enrique** 55:19

Yeah. And I think, you know, again, it comes back to there is no one size fits all solution, it needs to be, you know, something that is adapted to the needs of your, you know, of your business and the work you have. You're doing. So, Professor Cooper, you know, I think, you know, we covered a lot. Today, I

just wanted to do a bit of a recap of what we covered, and also just also mention a bit about these elements about, you know, within the strategy within the offering of mental health care, what is the role that mental, digital mental health can play. So, in regards to these topics, we covered the results of the survey, which are available in the in the record that you can download, also, the role of stigma, which, you know, as we recognise is something that it's it's a seems like, it's going away, in a way, it's decreasing, sorry. And it will continue to decrease as long as we keep the conversation open, how to create a strategy wellbeing plan, Professor Cooper, you covered a lot of key ingredients to the development of that of the plan. And also in the in the report, you'll find more of those in the, in the white paper, the role of line managers, and even, you know, being able to have a flexible work. Yeah, work in the sense that, you know, acknowledging that there is also this other reality outside of work, and how these external factors affect mental health. So, as a final point, in regards to this digital mental health solution on how can they fit within the strategy, because it's like, again, and I know you Professor Cooper have mentioned this in the in the podcast you had with my former colleague a couple of years that it is not only, you know, like, yeah, it's not about having the offering. It's about having it as part of the strategy. So having a digital mental health solution, as part of the of the strategy is important. And the point I wanted to make here, but it's not about having whatever solution, digital mental health solution, because as companies or as employers, as HR directors, when we are when we have sign off for doing these strategies, and including departmentalized technologies, where we do the due diligence, right, so what are the aspects to consider when I'm going to select a digital mental health platform?

**Dr. Angel Enrique** 57:37

For me, as a researcher in the field that I've been here for many years, over a decade, I've seen a huge proliferation of digital arts of digital mental health apps. And most of them are not backed by or even informed by evidence based practices or evidence based psychological interventions. And this is a problem. Because like, companies like like silvercloud, we do put a lot of effort in terms of like, working with subject matter experts to develop the interventions, and they make sure that these programmes have the active ingredients that make the interventions to work. Right. And not only that, but that they are testing to the most rigorous research to confirm the effects of these interventions, so that the interventions do what they say on the team. So when customers go with our solutions, they know they get evidence based psychological intervention, because remember, this is health and in healthcare, safety, and effectiveness needs to be upfront. So it's important that when doing the due diligence, you go for solutions that have that are evidence based. So yeah, I think that's all clear. I actually forgot about the poll. I'm not sure if it's like we're doing it because it's two minutes. I think we covered a lot of aspects. And it was great. I don't know Professor Cooper, but if you want to have anything, anything else, but yeah, in regards to this final point?

**Sir Cary Cooper** 59:04

No, I think we've covered quite a lot of the important issues, I think, really, but I guess my main point is strategy, strategy, strategy. You really have to please not just smoothies out of wellbeing day, please not, you know, mindfulness at lunch and, and all of that. Let's have a proper strategy. Let's look after people. You look after people that look after your business.

**Dr. Angel Enrique** 59:32



Thank you Professor Cooper. Claire, you're here again.

**Claire Farrow** 59:37

I put back up on the screen. I just wanted to say thank you very much, everybody. Lots of love coming in the chat here. Thank you. Very interesting, great discussion. Comment. We need much more in the public sector. Lots of great insights. And I just want to say thank you to Kerry Cooper for joining the session. Thank you and helpful for chairing the discussion. Thank you to the audience for sharing all your thoughts. have been lots and lots of thoughts coming through there. And I will be sharing the anonymized chats with the recording so that you can all see that and also the transcript because there's actually there are lots of lots of nuggets of insight that we've covered today. And you might want to go back over those and just recap. So thank you very much to the audience. Thank you very much Silvercloud by Amwell, for sponsoring, and thank you again to the panel for today. And we look forward to welcoming you to another Make a Difference webinar very soon. Anything else from you? That you wanted to say?

**Dr. Angel Enrique** 1:00:33

Well, again, just reiterate, thank you for allowing me need to be the host and I really enjoyed it. So Professor Cooper, and thank you for the audience, productive questions and engaging. I really enjoyed the conversation.

**Claire Farrow** 1:00:45

And we will be sharing the link to the paper. Somebody just put that in the chat. Thank you very much. See you all very soon. Thank you very much.